Looking back at 2013

ROBERT LOVINGOOD

As this year draws to a close, it's worth looking back at 2013, and I'm pleased to report we've had a number of successes that are having a positive impact.

I'm proud that we have brought greater oversight to county operations by insisting on "measurable results." One of my goals is to expand private-sector thinking and best practices within county government. On that front, I believe we are making progress.

During the year, we allocated additional funds for a series of High Desert crime sweeps. These sweeps take on added importance as counties struggle with the release of AB 109 inmates. Among all of government's responsibilities, public safety is the top priority. I'm committed to supporting innovative ways to increase public safety without increasing taxes.

I opposed a move for the county to absorb unclaimed property tax revenues. And at my direction, my staff tracked down many of those who were owed outstanding property tax refunds. In the end, we reached out to 1st District taxpayers who were owed more than \$100,000 in unclaimed property tax refunds.

When local 4-H clubs were threatened with closure in October, we quickly intervened to save the programs.

We supported a variety of local road projects and witnessed the long-awaited reopening of Lenwood Road and pavement rehabilitation projects on National Trails Highway in the Helendale and Oro Grande areas.

With fresh perspectives on the Board of Supervisors, we were able to reach a settlement in the nine-year-old Colonies lawsuit. The settlement was strongly supported by local city councils and brought an end to millions of dollars wasted in litigation.

The Board of Supervisors in June approved temporary moratorium on commercial solar projects in residential neighborhoods to allow time to write a renewable energy policy. And in December, the board unanimously passed an ordinance that I believe is a good compromise that increases protections for rural neighborhoods while setting fair guidelines for solar projects.

We lobbied federal officials to restore funding for the air traffic control tower at SCLA and a variety of other local and regional projects. We also successfully campaigned in support of Johnson Valley and the King of the Hammers off-road race, which draws 30,000 people a year and generates \$71 million for local economies. We met repeatedly with legislators to restore funding for local courts, and that struggle continues. We also partnered with the District Attorney's office to bring attention to the problem of human trafficking in the county.

Throughout the year, we personally met with constituents through a series of "Lovingood Listens" breakfasts and lunches around the 1st District. These informal meetings provide the public a chance to speak with me on an individual basis. Elected officials are famous for speaking out. But it's even more important for them to listen. That's why we started these meetings around the district, and we plan to continue them in the coming year. In the meantime, if you have an issue or a concern, please feel free to contact my office at (760) 995-8100 or email me at SupervisorLovingood@SBCounty.gov.